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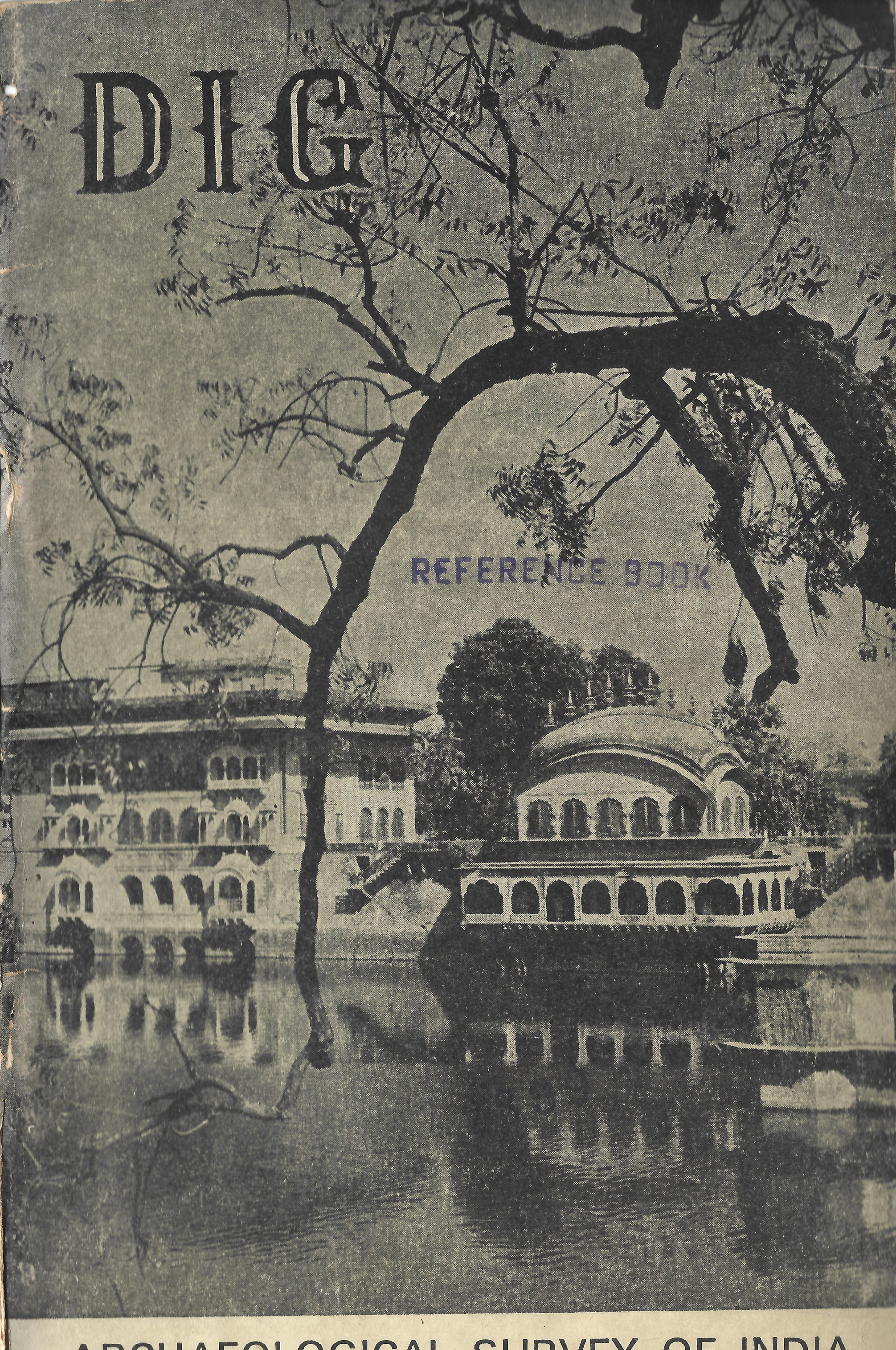

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DIG

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

Dig[1] (27°25′ lat.; 77°15′ long.) in District Bharatpur (Rajasthan), an eighteenth-century stronghold of the Jāṭ rulers, although little known, is a very fine spot to serve as a tourists' rendezvous for its picturesquely contrived garden-cum-water-places. Historically, too, this sleepy and medieval-looking town has some importance, as it silently relates the story of the gradual ascendency and subsequent development of aesthetic outlook of the Jāṭs, a warlike community of agriculturists.

Located at a distance of about 153 km from Delhi and 98 km from Agra, it can be easily approached by road via Kosi and Mathura or Bharatpur respectively. For accommodation, there is a rest-house maintained by the Public Works Department of the Rajasthan Government near the Bhawans. Permission to stay there is granted by the Sub-Divisional Magistrate for Dig, Bharatpur, or the Overseer, Public Works Department, Buildings and Roads, Kama-Darwaza, Dig.

Photographs and picture-postcards of the monuments can be purchased from the Superintending Archaeologist, Archaeological Survey of India, Northern Circle, 22 The Mall, Agra, and the Director General, Archaeological Survey of India, Janpath, New Delhi.

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[1] Dig is pronounced as Deeg (Dig).

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2. INTRODUCTION

A. Short History

Before the eighteenth century Dig was one of the numerous tiny and unknown villages of eastern Rajasthan, forming a part of the Agra province of the Mughal Empire. Traditionally, it falls within the territorial limits of the holy Braj-bhūmi or the land of Braj, which connects its past with the mythological hero Kṛishṇa and his kinsmen, the Yādavas, who, according to a strong local belief, were the ancestors of the modern Jāṭs of this region. Some scholars are inclined to identify Dig with Dīrghapura mentioned in the *Skanda-Purāṇa*[1] along with Nandigrāma (Nandgaon), Bṛihatsānu (Barsana) and Govardhana (Govardhan)—all in District Mathura (Uttar Pradesh). However, the antiquity of this place has yet to be proved archaeologically, although the Painted Grey Ware, a characteristic pottery of the first millennium BC, has been spotted in the vicinity of Dig at Januthar and Kushana[2].

Historically, the past of Dig is intimately associated with the rise of the Jāṭ peasants of neighbouring villages of Sinsini and Thun to power, as a result of the Mug͟hal

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[1] *Govardhane Dīrghapure Mathurāyāṁ Mahāvane Nandigrāme Bṛihatsānau......*II ; *Skanda-Purāṇa, Bhāgavata-māhātmya,* I, 38.

[2] Information from the Director of Archaeology and Museums, Rajasthan, Jaipur.

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misrule[1], under the leadership of Rājārām (1686-88), his father Bhajjāsingh (1688-95) and his younger brother Chūḍāman (1695-1721). After the death of Chūḍāman his nephew, Badansingh (1722-56) succeeded in assuming the headship of the clan and consolidating his authority over several outlying districts, and thereby becoming the virtual founder of the Jāṭ house of Bharatpur.

The credit for commencing the urbanization of Dig also goes to him, for, it was he who selected this spot as the headquarters of his newly-established Jāṭ kingdom. Gigantic mud-fortifications were, therefore, raised around the locality of Dig including the adjoining villages of Kishanpur, Malpur, Achalpur and Shahpur. Immediately afterwards, Badansingh constructed the capacious palace, now known as the Purānā-Mahal (old palace), standing to the south of Dig gardens. The strong citadel with towering walls and bastions, almost in the heart of the town, was erected slightly later, in 1730, by the prince regent Sūrajmal, the worthy son of Badansingh, subsequent to his recognition as a *bona fide* prince by Mahārāja Sawāī Jaisingh of Jaipur on the occasion of the latter's *aśvamedha* sacrifice[2]. About the same period, according to certain writers, the large charming tank called Rūp-Sāgar was built by Rūpsingh, the brother of Badansingh.

Under the shelter of the increasing power of this growing Jāṭ ruler, Dig was transformed into a flourishing town with fine buildings and riches and a centre of trade and commerce.

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[1] Amongst the Jāṭs, the one who first revolted, though unsuccessfully, against imperial Mug̲h̲al authority in 1669 was Gokalā, a zemindar of Tilpat near Delhi.

[2] Jawala Sahai, *Dig, its History and Palaces* (Lahore, 1902), p. 4.

Sūrajmal (1756-63), the son and successor of Badansingh, was the greatest of the Jāṭ monarchs, and during his rule the power of the clan reached its zenith. Besides being an able diplomat and general, he was one of the noted builders of his time. Although as the seat of his government, even during the life time of his father, he favoured Bharatpur, he did not altogether neglect Dig which, thenceforward functioned as a sort of second capital of his realm. As a town it became more prosperous and attractive and continued to grow in size[1]. Many merchant princes and Mug͟hal nobles enriched the city by their mansions for the safety of their wealth and family. The beautiful and grand garden-retreat adorning this city is the most outstanding of the artistic accomplishments of Sūrajmal and serves to this day as a glorious memorial to that celebrated hero of the Jāṭ clan. The project was commenced towards the later part of his reign; it is stated that he could complete till his death in 1763 at least the Gopāl-Bhawan with the Gopāl-Sāgar and the Kishan-Bhawan. However, a scholar[2] also attributes to him the construction of the Sūraj-Bhawan, which is not beyond doubt. In addition, he seems to have rebuilt the Hardev-Bhawan and erected certain large tanks and other edifices at Dig. For building these fine structures, Sūrajmal is said to have received a huge sum of money from G͟hāziu'd-Dīn 'Imādu' l-mulk, a deposed *wazīr* of Delhi and ally of the Jāṭ chief. The general superintendent of these constructions was his minister Jīvārām Banchārī, for whose residence the building named Rām-Bhawan, which is now under use as a hospital, is believed to have been built.

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[1] A poetic description of the palaces, gardens, tanks and markets of Dig is available in the verses of *Sujān-Bilās*, a Braj-Bhāshā work by Somnāth, a court poet of Sūrajmal. See Ravat Chaturbhujdas Chaturvedi, *Bharatpur aur atīt ke chinh* (in Hindi) (Bharatpur, 1956), pp. 14-17.

[2] Kalika Ranjan Qanungo, *History of the Jāṭs*, I (Calcutta, 1925), p. 289.

Following the death of Sūrajmal, his son, Jawāhirsingh (1764-68), was installed as the ruler of the Jāṭ principality at Dig. In the short period of his rule he completed certain palaces, including the Sūraj-Bhawan, planned by his father, and probably gave a finishing touch to the gardens and the fountains. A lover of grandeur and pomp, he looted several costly possessions of the Mug͟hals and removed valuable material from some of their palaces at Agra and Delhi to embellish his own city. The marble work and *pietra dura* decoration in the Bhawans is a contribution of this prince, for his aesthetic outlook had a deep impress of the Mug͟hal taste. Many edifices were still under construction from the time of Sūrajmal and there were others yet to be raised according to an already-approved plan, but owing to his premature death in 1768 at Agra, these could never be finished. In the city he added the locality called Jawaharganj, and possibly the temple of Lachhmanjī there was also founded simultaneously.

The subsequent history of Dig is of mutual dissension and consequent decline of the Jāṭ power. Although during the brief rule of the next two rulers, it continued to be the royal abode, its position in general received a set-back after the first success of the imperial army under Mirzā Nazaf K͟hān, the Mug͟hal general, on its soil about 1776. However, in 1787 Dig was restored to the Jāṭ prince Ranjītsingh who lost it again to the British in 1804, but it was given back to him in 1805. In the ensuing period no important event occurred here, though the Bhawan continued to be used for residential purposes by the rulers of Bharatpur State with minor additions or alterations.

B. Architecture

Often designated as the Jāṭ style, the architecture of Dig is mainly represented by the mansions called the Bhawans and Purānā-Maḥal, for other buildings surviving there do not display any outstanding or new structural features. All the palaces, excluding that of Badansingh are, in fact, the parts of a single garden-complex, and there is nothing spontaneous or original about them, yet the significant point of their architecture is the beauty of the treatment and presentation. The structural elements including the romantic landscape at Dig basically are the same as those forming the style of the Mughal emperor, S͟hāh Jahān; this however, was natural, for the Mug͟hal court and its culture served as the sole standard for almost all the princely states of north India at that time. But, while the legitimate descendants of the builder of the Tāj and others were turning his graceful style into a worthless rococo, the Jāṭs in their little locality individualized it by developing it logically. In this way Mahārāja Sūrajmal served as one of the able successors of the artistic legacy of the great Mughal builder. Therefore, formality, balance and symmetry are the essentials of this architecture, although in the short process of its evolution certain peculiar features also came into existence. Besides, the designers of the Dig edifices also had a little but unavoidable traditional and environmental influence of the soil of Rajasthan in their minds.

Of entirely secular order, the building-art at Dig does not resolve itself into very distinct constructional phases, as is generally the case elsewhere, though a closer examination of some buildings of Badansingh and Sūrajmal brings some interesting facts to light indicating a temperamental change, particularly in regard to ornamentation. The characteristics of the Purānā-Maḥal are massiveness, less systematic and less attractive internal arrangements and relatively simpler type of plastic decoration in brackets and pillars, whereas the Bhawans are marked by sophistication, regularity based on an order and profuse and delicate carvings besides their double roof, emphasized on the exterior by lower and upper eaves. Hence a suggestion can tentatively be hazarded that the artistic propensities of the father were more like those of a Rājpūt prince and of the son more inclined to those of a Mughal *amīr*.

The material of construction is stone, brick and mortar, and the edifices are either faced with sandstone slabs of pinkish colour or finely plastered. The marble and red sandstone encasement, respectively in Sūraj-Bhawan and the palace inside the fort, however, may be regarded as exceptions to the normal practice. The rubble, which has largely been utilized in the buildings, was imported from a place nearby called Pahar-Tal and the pinkish sandstone from the quarries of Bansi and Paharpur in District Bharatpur. In comparison to the red sandstone employed in the Mug͟hal buildings at Fatehpur-Sikri, Agra or Delhi, the variety largely used at Dig is somewhat harder and better suited for sculptural work, though not very inviting to look at.

This architecture is primarily of traveate order, but the use of arcuate system has also been made in certain instances. Mostly the arcades are of a decorative quality as each arch is formed by joining two spandrel-shaped slab cantilevers projecting from the pillars.

The general features of this style are engrailed arches resting on ornate pillars, hypostylar halls, flat roof-terraces, balconies and pavilions with Bengal roofs, double eaves, moderate structural heights and spacious internal arrangements. Other attractions of the structures are projecting dripstones, pillars with floral bases and tapering shafts normally surmounted by capitals bearing carved flower-petals. The ceilings are generally flat, though the domed and curved ones are also met within certain cases. Amongst other varieties of arches, the use, though limited, of semi-circular, trefoil and pointed apses too is worthy of note. It is surprising that the pointed type of arch of the Jāṭs is not a copy of the so-called Tudor arch of the Mug͟hals like the other elements but resembles its certain earlier types with a sharply-pointed apex and rounder curves.

The Bhawan-complex at Dig, like any example of good architecture, carries behind it a thought befitting a retreat based on the luxurious Mug͟hal ideal of earthly paradise on the one hand and the romantic tradition associated with the Indian rainy season (*varshā ṛitu*) on the other.

The designers here appear to have successfully combined the system of the earlier *jal-maḥal* (water-palace) with the scheme of a formal Mug͟hal garden. The latter also serves as the keynote with regard to the location of the buildings around. It appears that the planners of this retreat derived some inspiration from the layout of the Tāj, because the disposition of the buildings within the quadrangle faintly resembles the structural scheme of the great imperial mausoleum. The position of Tāj proper is occupied here by the Gopāl-Bhawan and the absence of a river has been substituted by the construction of a tank immediately behind it. But unlike the Tāj-Maḥal this mansion does not stand very prominent and none of the other principal palaces appear to be subordinate to it. In this respect the Jāṭ architects have perhaps symbolized the relatively democratic set-up of their own village-community.

Although not bearing a very imposing character, each Bhawan possesses a dignity and delicacy, and this aspect of the structure never obstructs the unity of the conception, yet on the other hand it strengthens the harmony between architecture and gardens. The flat roof of the edifices necessitated the use of a number of pillars arranged sidewise and centrally in groups which has not always proved architectonically sound. The striking characteristics of these palaces are balanced outlines, fine proportions, commodious halls, attractive and logically-disposed arcades, alluring greenery, charming tanks and canals with fountains—all forming a confluence of comforts, beauty and grace.

C. ORNAMENTATION

At Dig, the ornamentation consists mainly of sculpture done in low relief in which the floral patterns of a conventional type predominate. In this field the Jāṭ decorator attempted neither to explore anything new nor to make decoration an attraction by itself. It seems that for his craft he depended more on the dictates of the architect than on his own inspiration. He has concentrated in imitating the popular Mug̠hal patterns, particularly those of S̠hāh Jahān, and has shown outstanding skill in carving out the details. The only exception to this are certain obliterated paintings of the Purānā-Maḥal[1] wherein can be noticed, besides certain Persianized Mug̠hal decorations of usual type, a few panels showing Hindu mythological episodes, horses and elephants. Their striking features are bold outlines, rhythmic delineation and bright colour-scheme. The style is somewhat traditional, reminiscent of the older schools of western India, though there is slight touch of the Mug̠hal brush too. The limited occurrence of the inlay-work on the marble in the palaces here cannot be regarded as part of Dig ornamention, for it originally belonged to the royal edifices of Agra and Delhi.

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[1] The paintings on the four octagonal piers of the Nand-Bhawan are of later date, and have not, therefore, been discussed here.

In the manipulation of sculpture a certain amount of restraint has been observed and there is a co-ordination between embellishment and building. A large number of devices are based on the patterns of leaves and flowers which are more marked on the pillars, lower vertical edge of the brackets, fringe of the arches, fountains and towering ridge of Bengal roofs. It is true that these representations do not depict their natural forms with the accuracy of a realistic carver; yet, the tenderness of plant-life preserved in them through light chisel-marks and curves bespeaks the sculptor's study of his subject. Ornamentation of this type may not be a remarkable contribution in itself, but it is certainly worthy of garden-palaces. The less common motifs of ornamentation comprise decorative roofs, flower-vases, wine-flasks, fruits-on-saucer, scent-pots, stylized cypresses and birds of various species. The more popular ones are false niches and decorative squares and oblongs with full or partial foliations. Often the latter design embellishes the borders and railings. The spandrels have either full-blown flower-shaped bosses or the intricately-scrolled arabesques of the Mughals, but mostly the former seems to have been preferred.

D. GARDENS AND OTHER ATTRACTIONS

The layout of the Dig gardens is based on the strict formality of the Mug̲hal horticultural plan known as *c̲hār-bāg̲h* or the four-fold garden-pattern, and therefore, each plot is composed of four equal-sized parterres produced by means of four canals radiating from a formal tank in the centre like the arms of a cross. A notable characteristic of the Bhawan gardens is their conspicuous sunken appearance caused by deeper parterres and canals, and another is the absence of ornate stone flower-beds, which plausibly was an outcome of the intention of the designers to develop a thicker form of floriculture, unlike thinly and more regularly planted flowers of the earlier gardens; yet, while planting the trees they seem to have maintained the principle of discipline of the Mug̲hal horticulture.

In the task of producing artificial charms of water the Jāṭ architects had a better success than in anything else. The major mediums of water-display, besides the canals and tanks, are fountains, chutes, cascades and the system of imitating beauties of the monsoon. Although a little fantastic, the last-named item is original and decidedly Indian in character. The idea itself was poetic and most probably derived from the amorous literary tradition of the Braj-Bhāshā. The fountains, about five hundred in number, are both of large and small sizes, closely set to each other. Most of them have a sculptured floricomous body almost copying the pattern of the pillars existing here. In some cases there are arrangements for breaking the current of water into several smaller ones (*budbudās*) by means of a basin with perforated bottom attached to a pipe-line, thus producing quite a fanciful fountain inside a building. In at least two places can be noticed a new type of cascade much more ornate than its previous examples. These are in the form of flower-shaped semi-circular projections (*kamal-burjīs*), with a truncated top, on the front face of the terrace of the Gopāl-Bhawan, wherefrom the water was made to fall in the form of a thin and compressed sheet below, creating thereby a unique fascination.

3. MONUMENTS

A. THE BHAWANS

(i) *Layout*

THE Bhawans[1] of Dig are planned with a central ornamental garden along the edges of a vast oblong (pl. IX) guarded by two grand reservoirs, Rūp-Sāgar and Gopāl-Sāgar on the east and west. However, the corner-stone of this whole structural scheme is the fourfold design of the central garden (above, p. 12), for the principal edifices are situated just above the outer end of each of the four garden-canals; thus, amidst the eastern, southern, western and northern sides of the quadrangle respectively stand the Kesav-Bhawan, Gopāl-Bhawan with flanking Sāvan and Bhādon pavilions, Kishan-Bhawan and Nand-Bhawan. To the north of the central garden is an oblong patch of land forming a secondary garden which is separated from the former by a wide causeway, but according to original plan this perhaps was intended to serve as a part of the second half of the stately building-complex with the Nand-Bhawan in the centre, which could never be

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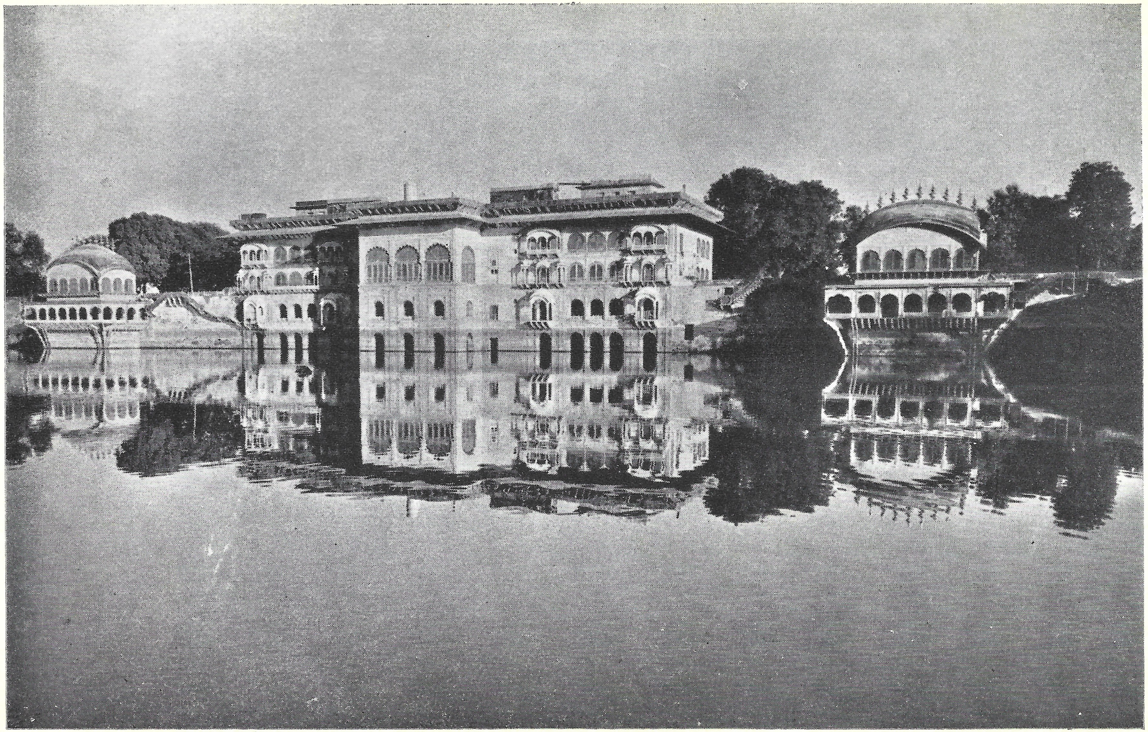
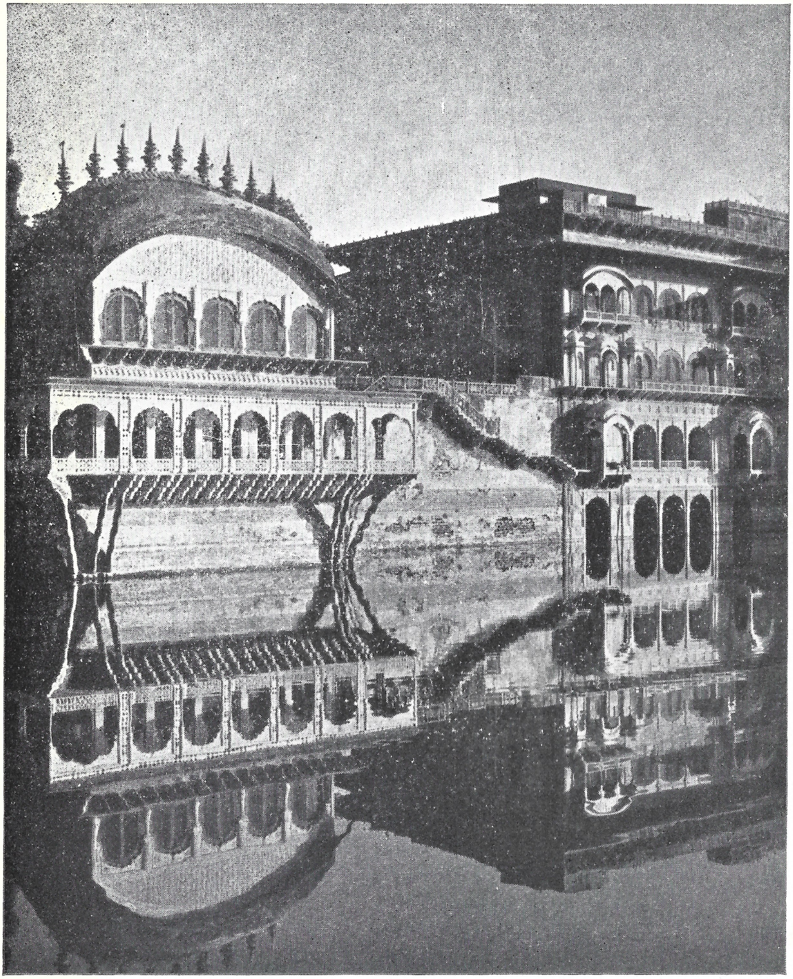
[1] The Vishṇuite impact discernible in the names of the Gopāl, Haradev (Hari-deva), Kishan, Kesav and Nand-Bhawans shows the sense of respect and devotion of the Jāṭ rulers for Kṛishṇa, the mythological hero of Braj.

PLATE I

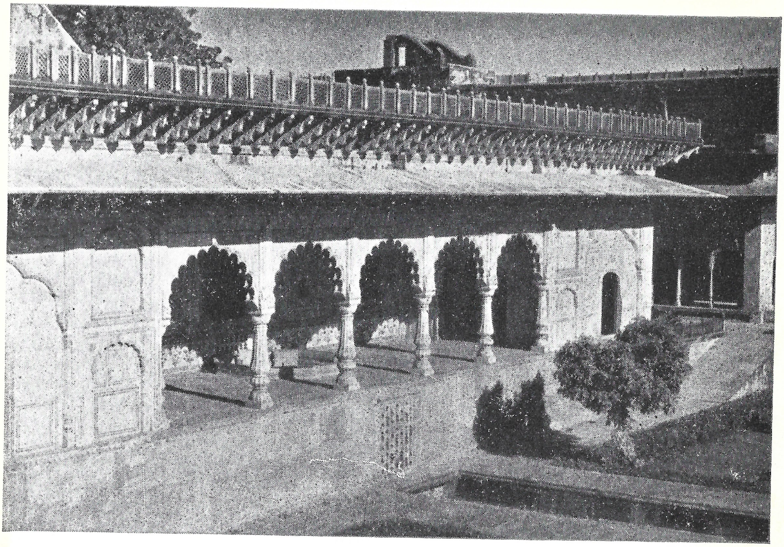


Gopāl-Bhawan flanked by Sāvan and Bhādon-pavilions with Gopāl-Sāgar in foreground. See p. 15

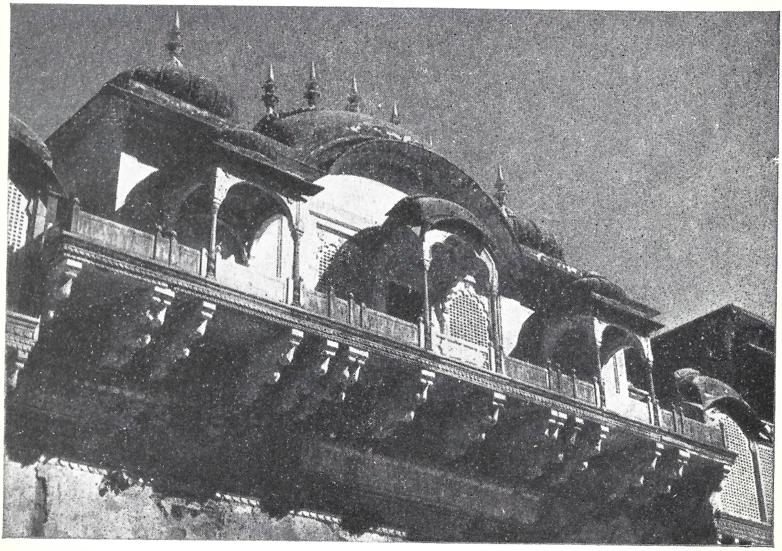
PLATE II



Closer view of Gopāl-Bhawan and Sāvan-pavilion. See pp. 17 and 18

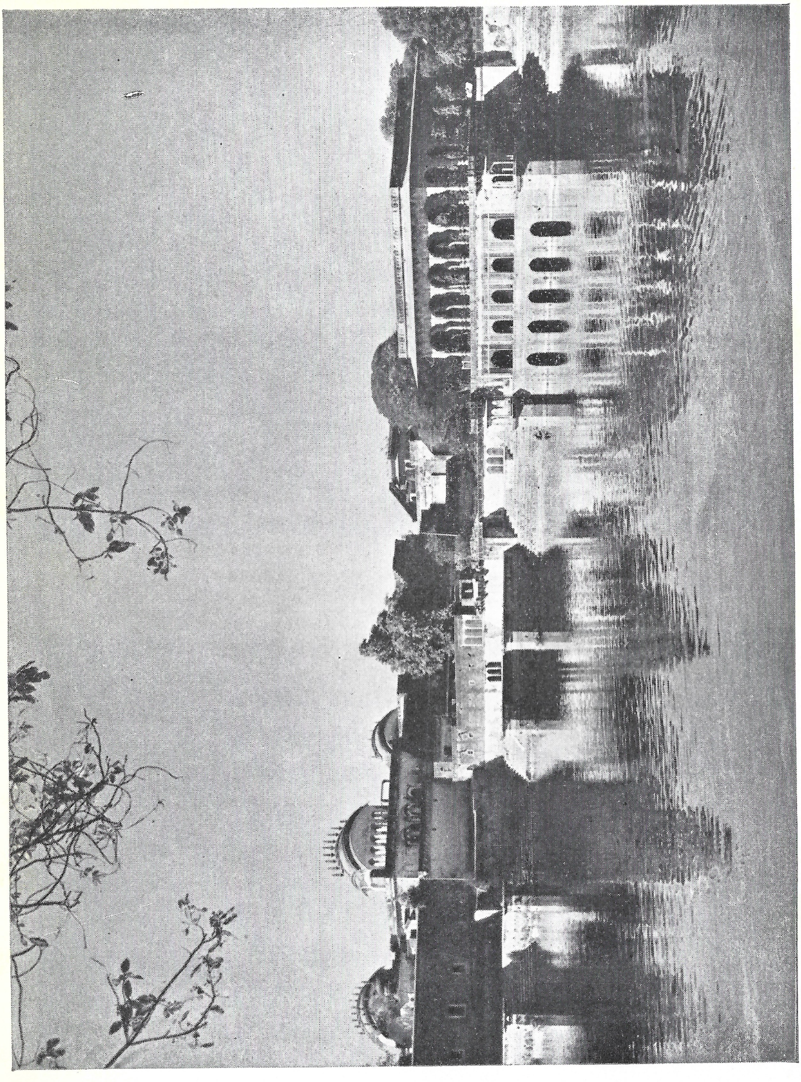


A. *Sūraj-Bhawan. See p. 20*



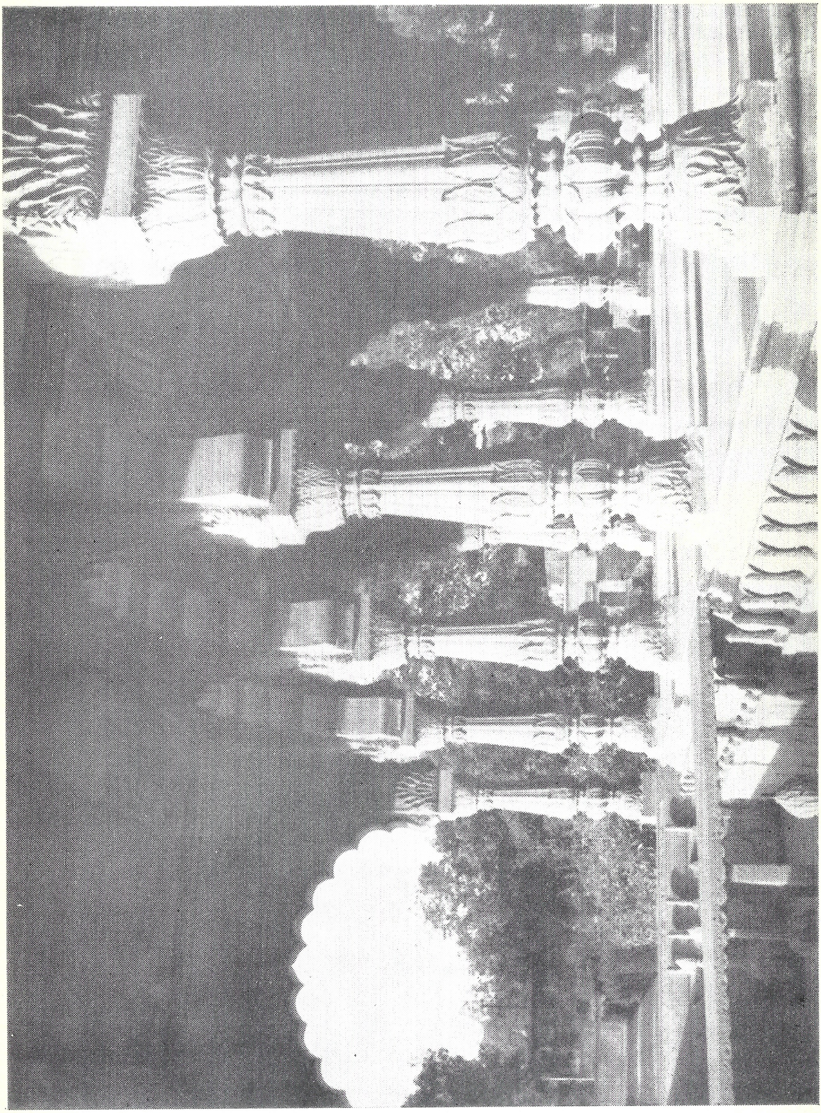
B. *Part view of Hardev-Bhawan. See p. 22*

PLATE IV



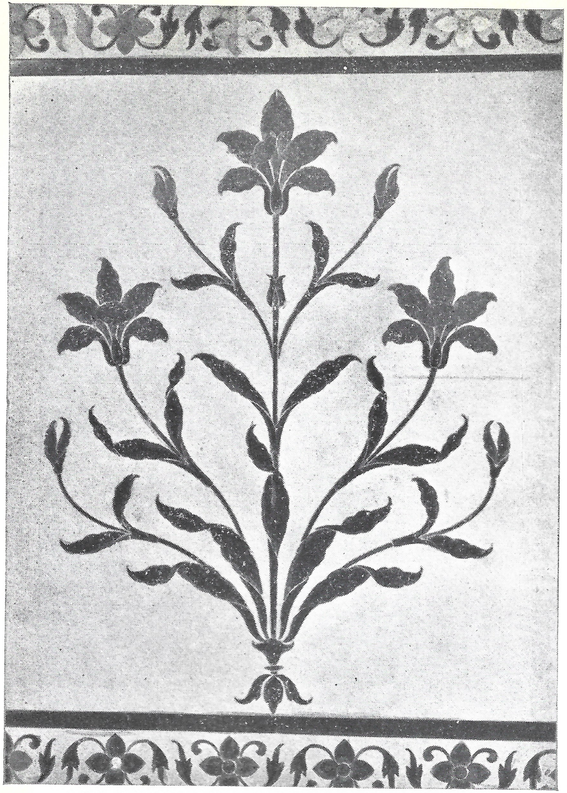
Kesav-Bhawan and Purānā-Mahaḷ with Rūp-Sāgar in foreground. See pp. 25 and 29

PLATE V

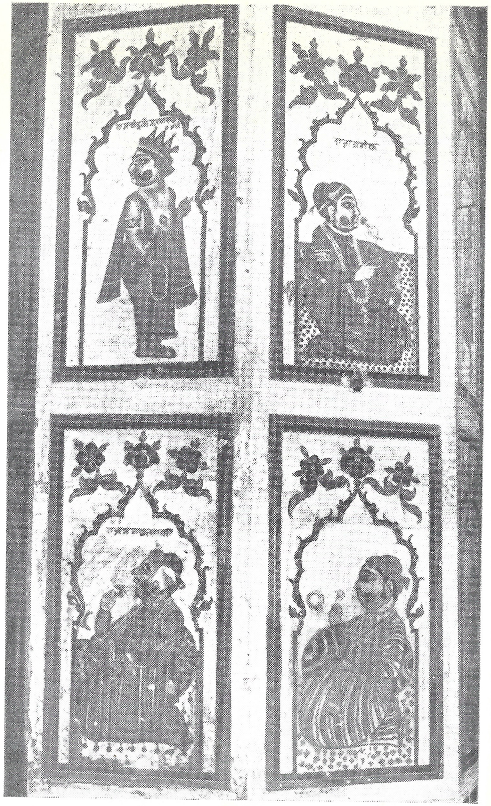


Kesav-Bhawan, interior. See p. 25

PLATE VI

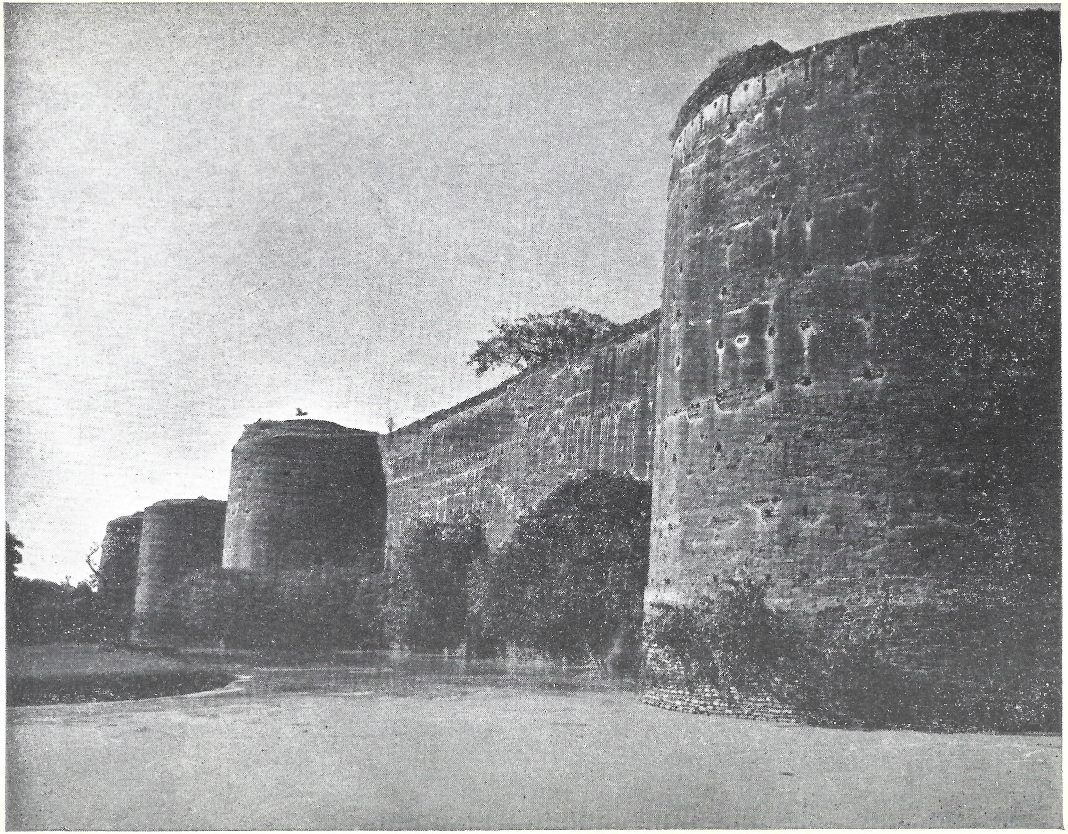


A. *Pietra dura decoration, Sūraj-Bhawan. See p. 21*



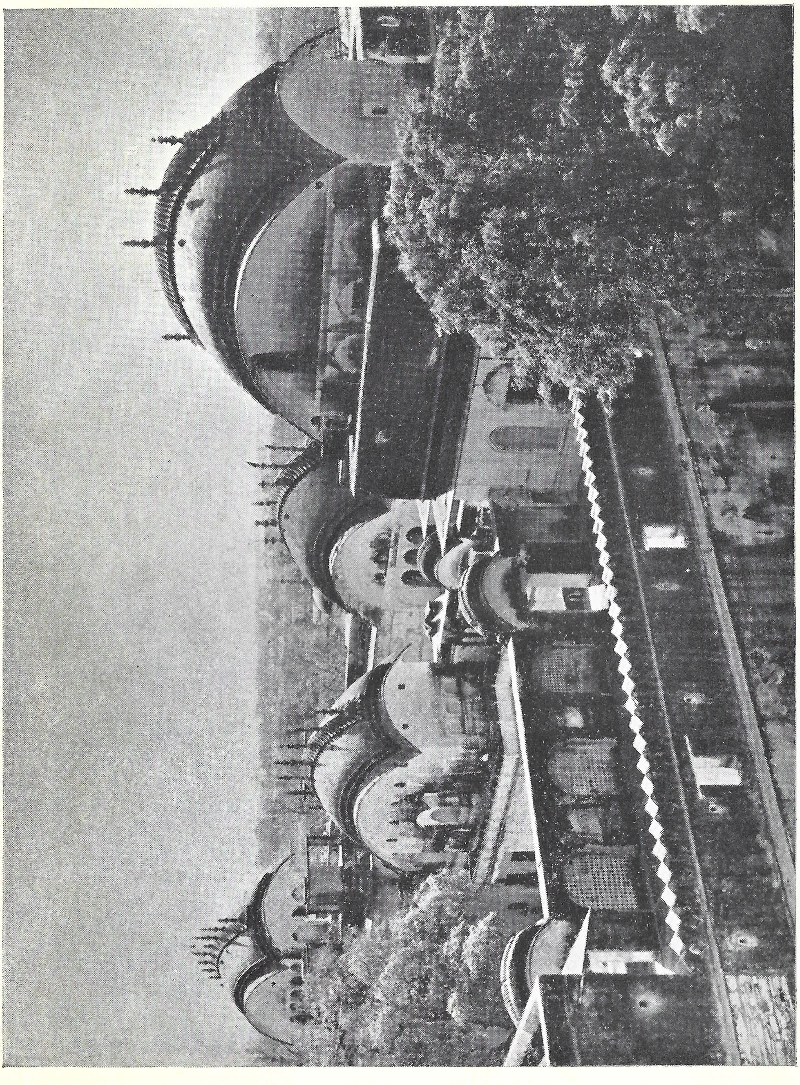
B. *Painted pier, Nand- Bhawan. See p. 27*

PLATE VII



Fort-wall, general view. See p. 31

PLATE VIII



Crowning pavilions, Purānā-Maḥal. See *p.* 30

completed. The other edifices of note within the quadrangle, besides the water-reservoir, are the Hardev- and Sūraj-Bhawans occupying almost the south-western angle of the garden adjoining the Kishan-Bhawan. The principal entrance to the enclosure is now through the Singh-Pol situated opposite the Sūraj-Bhawan on the north; the two remaining gates, though modern, are the Naṅgā and Sūraj gates built almost on the south-western and north-eastern corners of the Bhawan-compound, respectively.

(ii) *The Gopāl-Bhawan*

The largest and most admirable of all the buildings, the Gopāl-Bhawan, for its imaginative setting and commendable architecture, competes well with other palaces of contemporary Rājpūt princes. Its structural beauties reflecting themselves into surrounding sheets of water create a unique charm in the environs (pl. I). Apart from its external grace, one has to appreciate its relatively modern internal set-up with well-lighted airy rooms unlike the royal residences of the middle ages. Conceived basically as an oblong (62·18 by 18·90 m), the plan of this edifice has been transformed into an irregular cruciform on account of central projections on the longer sides. The Bhawan, with a height of about 9·75 m and a flat roof, resolves itself into three principal portions, viz., a median and two side ones. Though built mainly in two storeys, this palace in certain parts has three and even four storeys, particularly towards its water-front, where two oblong basement-storeys were constructed for cool shelter during summer and fishing-purposes.

The outstanding feature of its eastern façade is the central projection covered with majestic arches and well-sculptured imposing pillars. This forms the eastern half of the royal reception-hall (23·16 by 16·76 m) which has another pleasing range of similar arches in the middle, facing those of the front. It is a single-storeyed apartment like the Dīwān-i-‘Ām of S̲h̲āh Jahān and in the similar way has a railed alcove[1] amidst the thickness of the back wall. Near the alcove on the floor is a small newly-paved marble water-basin rectangular on plan, graced with modern reproductions of old fountains. Another delightsome feature of the hall is the arcaded balcony in the upper storey along each shorter sides within its inner half. Exactly opposite the grand hall a smaller oblong chamber, enclosed on three sides by the arcades of the usual kind, forms the western projection, which contains two beautifully-carved though restored stone basins with fountains and commands a pleasing view of the tank and gardens beyond. Between the two halls are several alleys and apartments of which those of the first floor deserve special mention for the sculptural work on decorative Bengal roofs adorning the principal doors and passages of light.

The side-wings of the palace seem to have been planned as purely residential suites. Of these, each comprises a front and back hall of moderate dimensions (7·62 m square) with a central corridor and rooms of different sizes on either side in both the storeys. The frontage of each hall is pierced by three arched openings, and in the ground floor the existence of four pillars, forming a central group and housing inside a fountain-basin, arrests attention. A room of the northern wing contains a throne or throne-platform of black marble and another of the southern of white marble, and both these are believed to be spoils of war removed by Jawāhirsingh from the imperial palaces of Delhi.

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[1] According to Devenish the alcoves within the walls of the rooms were used exclusively by the ladies of the *zanāna*. See J. A. Devenish, *The Bhawans or Garden Palaces of Dig* (Allahabad, 1903), p. 53.

Attached to the main façade of the Gopāl-Bhawan is a tank (10·97 by 7·62 m), having as many as fifteen fountains and flanked by two canals with jets planned along the angles of the façade. But, of the whole exterior the most splendid component is the western face (pl. II) of the building rising above the waters of the Gopāl-Sāgar and decked with rows of overhanging kiosks and balconies on the sides. Once the roof-terrace of the building was surmounted by a *chhatrī* with hipped roof flattened at the ridge; its absence today somewhat diminishes the grace of this noble composition.

(iii) *The marble swing*

In front of the Gopāl-Bhawan a railed terrace, resting on narrow and small arches, carries an arch of lustrous marble called *hiṇḍolā* or swing installed on a pedestal of the same material. It is stated that this swing was removed from the Phulhārī palace at

Weir near Bayana and set up in the present position some time during the third quarter of the nineteenth century. But this might have been brought as a trophy of war originally from Delhi by Sūrajmal or Jawāhirsingh.

The *hiṇḍolā* is in fact the arcuate frame of the actual swing, which was to be suspended through two central rings from the top. Of this arch the crowning components are tiny and solid domes on the sides and a fine spike at the apex. Its marble pedestal, adorned with *pietra dura*, bears an inscribed slab in Persian dated AH 1041 (AD 1630-31) which refers to a certain regnal year 4 without giving the name of the king.[1] But, as the earlier date itself corresponds with the 4th year of S̲hāh Jahān's rule, the authorship of this swing can be safely assigned to him.

(iv) *The pavilions*

The Gopāl-Bhawan is flanked by two detached pavilions known as Sāvan (month of July-August) and Bhādon (month of August-September), respectively, on the north and south sides. Hanging from the western face of the terrace of the Bhawan on the Gopāl-Sāgar, they are in conformity with the alignment of the western projection of the palace and accentuate the general architectural effect of the whole group. Each of them (pl. II) is in two storeys, only the upper one of which is visible from the front, and has a fascinating hut-shaped roof crowned by a row of elegant spikes. The upper storey is in the form of a hall (10·97 by 7 m) enclosed by well-relieved arcades on all faces. The real attraction of the rainy months (*Sāvan* or *Bhādon*) is, however, to be found in the lower floor, which consists of a hall with a gallery at the back and verandahs separated by means of piers carrying the arches on three sides. In the middle of back wall of the gallery is a wide carved chute, for the charming flow of water, which is connected through a hidden drain with a shallow oblong cistern in the hall and a flattish water-sprinkling basin in its centre. On the outer side of the hall, above the spandrels of the arches, copper pipes are fitted, so that the water falling through them, in the form of a semicircle on the verandah, may stage the beautiful scene of the rainy-season. The façades of the verandah are embellished with embowed openings having finely-carved latticed rails. At the base of the structure, the brackets, supporting the verandah and particularly the long struts of the corners, impart to it the shape of a keel which lends the whole composition the look of a large floating boat with a cabin at the top. The ground before the upper storey is worked into a garden of usual type having intersecting canals with jets for communicating the idea of the greenery caused by rains.

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[1] Information from Dr Z. A. Desai, Director (Ephigraphy) of the Survey.

(v) *The Sūraj-Bhawan*

Named after Sūrajmal, the builder of the Bhawans, it is a handsome building of marble, the structural beauty of which is somewhat marred by its improper location. This consists of a single storey and is devised as a square of 26·80 m with a flat roof (above 6·70 m). The rich material and general architectural treatment of the Sūraj-Bhawan reminds one of S͟hāh Jahān's structural products, and its design too bears affinities with certain earlier Mug͟hal edifices.

The marble employed herein belongs, entirely or partially, to more than one of the royal buildings of the Mug͟hals, for the slabs used in its walls do not always match in size and texture. Popularly this building is supposed to contain the marble slabs of the royal school for the princesses in the Red fort, Delhi, which probably was one of the many victims of Jawāhir's fury. In addition to this the Jāṭs appear to have also used some fresh marble which did not belong to any previous edifice; this is evident from the definite stamp of Dig architecture on some of the constituents of Sūraj-Bhawan. It is possibly due to Jawāhir's death that the encasement of the structure remained incomplete. The idea to cover it with white marble more probably was an afterthought, for certain pavements, its plinth, major portion of the western face and a large number of eaves and brackets are still in sandstone. In order to give them the resemblance of marble, with the exception of the plinth, they have been coated with a fine variety of lime plaster.

On each face, the Bhawan (pl. IIIA) consists of a verandah with five arched openings and rooms flanking at the corners which have domical-ceilings decorated, like many Mug͟hal buildings, with a single carved lotus. The floor of every verandah studded with a central tank containing jets was to serve as an object of beauty

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for the structure as well as for its occupants. Behind the verandahs the floor of the building has been raised by 0·91 m; the raised floor is occupied by a chamber in the middle, encompassed by four low-cells and their connecting corridors. The dados of the central apartment are bordered with excellent *pietra dura* work, and the marble floors of the corridors and cells around are also decked in the same manner. The main room of the building is lighted through windows and recesses of the corridors. Their presence relieves the monotony of the walls to a great extent. The curved ceiling of the corridors supported by semi-circular arches is of some interest here, besides several slabs containing plants (pl. VIA) executed in *pietra dura* by Mughal lapidaries.

The internal arrangements of the Sūraj-Bhawan are more like a pavilion than a place of residence and this was probably designed for the exclusive use of ladies as a place of rest and recreation. The sandstone structure with a verandah and side-compartments on the east of this mansion has perhaps been erected to preserve its architectural effect. Flanked by tanks and gardens on the sides and aided by the features of Dig architecture, this building in the marble clothing attains, no doubt, some grace.

(vi) *The Hardev-Bhawan*

Immediately at the back of the Sūraj-Bhawan lies this palace forming a charming quadrangle around an attached inner garden. A set-up of this kind was very common with the royal abodes of the middle ages in India, especially of the Mughals. The Hardev-Bhawan does not appear to be an original part of the main Bhawan complex considering its situation at a corner. Most likely this was an earlier mansion, later on rebuilt by Sūrajmal to suit his taste and requirements. Possibly its northern wing was demolished to accommodate the Sūraj-Bhawan. A closer examination of the structure itself supports this assumption; however, the back-portion of the building seems to be original.

The principal block on the south is double-storeyed and stands in an impressive position overlooking the accessory garden. The lower floor consists of a projecting central hall, faced with arches springing from a row of double pillars. Behind the front arches is an arcaded colonnade running along the three sides of the inner group of four pillars roughly analogous to those available within the side wings of the Gopāl-Bhawan. At the back of the hall is an oblong corridor with a raised floor and domed cells at each end, a feature also common to the Sūraj-Bhawan, but much simpler otherwise. A rectangular chamber with a verandah flanked by cells has been built on either hand of the hall. On the east a comfortable ramp provides access to the upper storey, which has a railed central terrace and two pillared *dālāns* to its right and left. The hind part of the terrace is occupied by a crowning *chhatrī* bearing a spiked curved-roof attended by miniature side-domes (pl. III B). This kind of grouping makes the building an effective composition. A narrow gallery, screened with obliquely-cut *jālīs* runs at the back of the upper floor.

The secluded position of the Hardev-Bhawan suggests that it was solely meant for the royal females. The other two sides of the quadrangle have ordinary rooms flanking a central verandah, which is in two floors on the east. There is nothing special about the garden of the Hardev-Bhawan except that it is of a strictly private nature appropriate for ladies' quarters. The jets studded in the four garden canals are very small and are modelled after the lotus-bud without any sculptured body. But it is difficult to state whether this was the original form or a later alteration.

(vii) *The Kishan-Bhawan*

Rising amidst the southern fringe of the complex, this pretentious fabric comprises a well-decorated and extensive panelled façade (8·84 m high) broken by five large central archways and enriched by the presence of a charming tank with thirteen fountains on its terrace. Its structural grace is further enhanced, besides the drip-stones, by three short-ornamental projections of the parapeted roof.

The archways communicate with a large hall (19·20 by 16·45 m) akin in some respects to the main hall of the Gopāl-Bhawan. The spandrels of middle and front arches are adorned with thickly carved arabesques. On the back wall the striking feature is an alcoved balcony with exuberantly carved front side. Its false curved roof with delicate decorative details representing a foliaged hut and ornate flanking members demands special attention. Sculptured peacocks and tender flower-plants also embellish some of the structural accessories of the hall. Along each shorter sides of the hall are two rooms, and at the back a long corridor with raised floor which leads to a small cell with a half-decagonal plan, projecting from the sourthern wall.

The southern part of the flat roof of the Kishan-Bhawan is surmounted by a pretty arcaded-pavilion, accentuating the vertical effect of the fabric. This addition is believed to have been made by Rājā Balwantsingh (1826-53) of Bharatpur.

(viii) *The water-reservoir*

On the west of the Kishan-Bhawan, at the level of its roof, is water-reservoir resting on massive arches which are covered by a high enclosure-wall on the north. The purpose of erecting the tank at such a height was only to operate the fountains, chutes and cascades within the buildings and gardens in the best possible way. Measuring about 40·85 by 31·70 m, the tank is 2 m deep and has thus a vast capacity. There are numerous holes on its walls which form the mouths of various pipe-lines connected with different groups of fountains. For filling it up four wells are built in its close vicinity, and the water from them was raised by means of leather buckets drawn by bullocks. The tank in olden days could be filled in about a week's time. If all the fountains etc. are played the water runs out in a few hours.

(ix) *The Kesav-Bhawan*

More commonly known as *bāradarī*, it is a pleasantly situated square pavilion (18·18 m) overlooking the Rūp-Sāgar on the one hand and garden on the other. The building is placed on a platform having projecting semi-octagonal quoins recalling the pattern of the bases of corner-*mīnārs* or towers of Mug͟hal structures. The *bāradarī* occupies a conspicuous position over the artificial lake amid the western section of its *ghāṭ*, of which a portion seems to have been utilized by the designers for constructing this edifice (pl. IV).

Bearing moderate height, single-storeyed Kesav-Bhawan is an open pavilion. Each of its faces is composed of five noble arches serving as vertical passages for light in gracing it externally. But the remarkableness of the building lies in its more fanciful internal arrangements, some of which were aimed to create a sensational scene of the rainy season. Centrally the Bhawan is diversified by an arcade running on all sides and forming an inner square, which is separated from outer one by means of a 0·91 m wide canal engirding it. The canal is bordered on both of its edges by tiny jets and has a bolder row of larger fountains in the middle (pl. V). Although not stressed outwardly as the other buildings, this structure too bears a double-roof, which was utilized once for featuring an entirely novel item i.e. the artificial thunder of clouds. This device was operated with the pressure of water passing to the lower roof through certain hollow pillars of the structure with considerable force and thereby rotating some heavy lithic balls kept on it which created the intended sound. The water, when released from the roof through the pipes above the arches, set the spectacle of rains, and the fountains, while in full play during a sunny day, completed the fantasy by producing a rainbow.

(x) *The Nand-Bhawan*

A distinguished edifice raised on a terrace, the Nand-Bhawan, with an area of about 45 by 26 m, comprises a spacious oblong hall resembling an auditorium, which is enclosed by grand arcade of seven openings and narrow walled wings on the longer and shorter sides respectively. Dividing the hall into an inner and an outer section, there is a central arcade of usual type arranged on a rectangular pattern. Each flanking wing of this pavilion consists of a raised floor covered by intercommunicating compartments having walls decked with ornamental alcoved-balconies, three of which facing the hall are in marble inlaid with semi-precious stones. Similar decoration also occurs on the large sunken basins of marble fixed on the floor of hall, between the shorter sides of the central arcade and side-wings. It is quite likely that the material used in balconies and basins came from Delhi as part of the booty.

The ceiling of the central portion of the hall in wood suggests that the designers wanted to embellish it on the lines of the ceiling of the Dīwān-i-Khāṣ in Delhi. The roof above this part also rested on timber beams; consequently it collapsed in 1867 but was restored by the use of iron girders. Perhaps the building needed more pillars to serve as support for its flat roof, to prevent which from further dilapidation massive piers have lately been raised in the hall. The piers at the corners bear crude paintings done mostly in a degenerated local style showing some Mug͟hal influence, and yet a few of them are interesting (pl. VI B). Plausibly the Nand-Bhawan also had the provision for an upper storey which, however, could not be built due to some unknown reason. Like other buildings it also has a tank in front on the south, deep eaves and well finished exterior.

(xi) *The Singh-Pol*

One of the three gates of the complex, this is an unfinished structure having a central projection on the north faced by a huge archway connected with a vestibule across the building. Flanking the entrance on each hand there are two superimposed arcaded compartments in the entrance-projection corresponding to the double floors of the structure. Their existence adds dignity to the entrance proper considerably. The stone encasement herein is confined only to a small portion and the carvings executed over it are extravagant and unrestrained. Architecturally, it appears to be a work of relatively later date than the Bhawans. The gate (*pol*) is called Singh-pol (lion portal) after two lions sculptured amidst thick arabesque on the spandrels of the front arch-way. A tiny relief of Kṛishṇa with a cow and dancing peacock representing him as a cowboy and the brāhmaṇical god Gaṇeśa attended by two ladies also occur on the gate, but the workmanship is inferior. The apartments on sides of the vestibule are finely built, and below there are underground apartments probably designed to serve as stores or retiring rooms.

The other two gates erected by Mahārāja Balwantsingh (1826-53) are structurally very simple; a few slabs containing arabesque designs fixed on them hardly seem to be of any interest.

(xii) *The central garden*

The central or the principal garden (pl. IX) of the Bhawan-complex as already stated (above, pp. 12 and 14) has a *c̲hār-bāg̲h* (four-fold) plan executed through four canals forming the pattern of a cross with a formal octagonal tank in the middle. At the starting point, each canal is provided with a cascade. The parterres of the garden are surrounded by flagged foot-paths which are connected with the buildings through comfortable ramps and flights of steps. Numerous fountains rising from the beds of canals and tank heighten the pleasantness of the environs. The frontal projections of the terrace of the Nand- and Kishan-Bhawans encroach upon a large portion of the garden but this arrangement creates a concord between the nature and architecture.

There is nothing of special note about the flora here, yet the position of certain trees suggests that the Mug̲hal order of plantation was in vogue at one time, although characteristics of an Indian moon-light garden also existed.

(xiii) *The Rūp-Sāgar*

Generally called Pakkā Tālāb, it is amongst the earlier structures of Dig. The maximum depth of it is stated to be about 6 m and the area occupied by it measures 82 m square. An outstanding structural feature in this reservoir is noticeable in its surrounding bathing-*ghāṭs* (pl. IV) composed of noble flights of steps broken into several divisions by bold galleried-projections with a semi-octagonal face. The treatment of this kind strenghtens the fabric and enlivens the architecture. A local tradition avers that the Rūp-Sāgar was built by Rūpsingh, the brother of Badansingh, at the instance of his spiritual preceptor.

(xiv) *The Gopāl-Sāgar*

Designed as an oblong (pl. I), this tank is said to have the same depth as the Rūp-Sāgar. Till 1866 the Gopāl-Sāgar had earthen embankments and even now the western side, opposite the Gopāl-Bhawan, is in original state, from which it derives its other name, Kachchā Tālāb. The northern and southern sides of the tank furnished with good *ghāṭs* appear quite impressive.

B. THE PURĀNĀ-MAHAL

To the south of the Rūp-Sāgar stands the palace called the Purānā-Maḥal close to the Bhawan complex.

Built by Badansingh, it has a robust and stately exterior. It is planned as a spacious rectangle, with an interior composed of two separate courts engirded on all sides by ranges of compartments, vestibules and chambers. Although less refined in character, architecturally it is more sound than the Bhawans. Normally with two floors, at certain places it bears three-storeyed blocks to emphasize the structural effect. From the standpoint of external grace, propitious setting of its *chhatrīs* with curved roof as coronating-components is really remarkable (pl. VIII). The arches used here are both of engrailed and pointed type.

Some importance can be attached to certain obliterated wall-paintings (see above, p. 10) inside the gate leading from the eastern court to the inner one. The entrance-chamber seems to have been painted by the decorators of Mug͟hal and Rājpūt schools. The paintings consist of popular decorative designs on the ceiling and scenes depicting episodes mainly from the life of Kṛishṇa and figures of a few Brāhmaṇical deities, besides elephants and horses. All these are executed on the stucco plaster sticking to the wall which itself serves as the background. The painted figures have a restricted and simple colour-scheme, bold outlines and angular manipulation tending to roundness in the form of flowing garments. The depictions are flat and the scenes suffer from lack of perspective. In the treatment of the trees the painter seems to have followed the pre-Mug͟hal schools of western India. However, there appears to be some Mug͟hal impact in the dress and structures delineated there.

This monument is utilized at present for official purposes by the State Government, and it has been considerably altered internally. Nevertheless, it deserves a visit for its attractive structural qualities.

C. THE SHĪSH-MAḤAL

The builder of the Shīsh-Mahal (glass palace) was Navalsingh, a son of Sūrajmal, who also erected a palace for himself in Rām-Bāgh near Dig. Now a dilapidated mansion, it stands very close to the Puranā-Maḥal, and only its hind part with crowning *chhatrīs* is in the original state, which attains a picturesque effect due to the proximity of the Rūp-Sāgar. Of its other features, except certain columns and round arches of the ruined front, nothing has any merit. There were *ḥammāms* (Turkish baths) attached to the building at one time and possibly after their decorative character involving the use of glass, the edifice got its present name.

D. THE FORT

To the east of the Rūp-Sāgar beyond the Shīsh-Maḥal one sees the massive castle (pl. VII) of Dig, raised by Sūrajmal in his capacity as a prince. This formidable edifice has a square plan, excluding the barbican on the north, roughly measuring about 274 m square. Its walls made of rubble and mud over 20 m in height, are strengthened with twelve imposing bastions, the largest being on the north-west corner known as Lākhā-Burj. Externally the walls were coated with plaster which in many places has peeled off. A wide, though somewhat shallow, moat surrounds the fort, to which access is possible through a bridge on the northern side connected with the only gate. Several large guns of the Jāṭs are still lying inside and these are said to have been cast locally.

The principal building in the fort is a partially-ruined palace or Havelī, some parts of which have been reconstructed in this century almost on the original lines. The plan of the palace is conventional, in that it has a court encompassed by compartments. Its smaller division on the north, without doubt, is a later addition. The employment of red sandstone and pointed arch in the construction in this building is noteworthy.

Other structures within the castle include certain underground chambers, the tomb of Muḥammad S̲h̲afī, a Mug̲h̲al *mīr-i-bak̲h̲s̲h̲ī*, who was killed in 1783 at Au, and the *chhatrī* of Sultānsingh, the brother of Sūrajmal.

E. Fortifications

The ruined fortifications enclosing the town of Dig are about 7·24 km in circuit. The walls were so high and massive at one time that at first sight Madec, the French General, compared them with 'a long range of hillocks utilized for the purpose of enclosing the city'. These fortifications are relieved by huge bastions and protected by a broad ditch around except near the lofty S̲h̲āh-Burj. Piercing the fortifying wall there are ten gates known as the Au, Bhūrā, Pānhorī, S̲h̲āhpur, Bandhā, Kāmā, Dihlī (Delhi), Jasondī, Govardhan and Rāmchelā Darwāzas. The wall between the Pānhorī and S͟hāhpur gates is in masonry but the rest of it is of mud.

F. Minor structures

As the relics of past a number of fully and partly ruined buildings can be seen at Dig as at any other deserted capital. Some of these have been reconstructed and are being utilized for different purposes. Amongst such structures mention may be made of the Rām-Bhawan outside the Bhawan enclosure, the Chandra-Bhawan or Chattā to the north of the Nand-Bhawan within the city and the *chhatrī* of Rūpsingh, besides the tank called Lālā-Kuṇḍ built by a certain merchant-prince of Dig and Lachhmanjī's temple. The last named is a feeble example of Hindu religious architecture showing an admixture of the older temple style of western India and the late Mug͟hal building-art.

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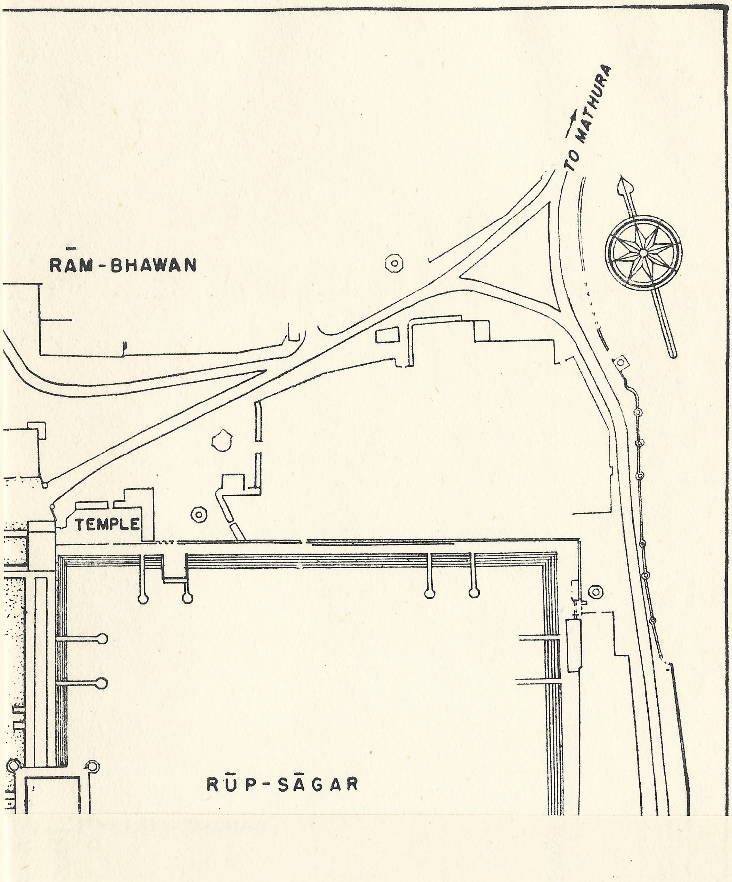
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